
LEGAL UPDATE

Legal Services Division



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IOWA CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION MEETING — SEPTEMBER 13, 2019

Purpose. *Legal updates are prepared by the nonpartisan Legal Services Division of the Legislative Services Agency. A legal update is intended to provide legislators, legislative staff, and other persons interested in legislative matters with summaries of recent meetings, court decisions, Attorney General Opinions, regulatory actions, federal actions, and other occurrences of a legal nature that may be pertinent to the General Assembly's consideration of a topic. Although an update may identify issues for consideration by the General Assembly, it should not be interpreted as advocating any particular course of action.*

Date and Location. The Iowa Civil Rights Commission (commission) met on September 13, 2019, in the Grimes State Office Building.

Petition for Rulemaking. Executive Director Elizabeth Johnson presented a petition for rulemaking submitted by Mr. Emir Dini and a response prepared by Assistant Attorney General Katie Fiala. Commissioner Kooiker asked Assistant Attorney General Fiala to respond to Mr. Dini's allegation that the current complaint process is redundant. Assistant Attorney General Fiala responded that the complaint provides for a narrative and the second step includes questionnaires that have specific questions based on the type of alleged discrimination and that the commission gains additional information from the questionnaires. She also explained that nevertheless, the complainant is able to provide the complainant's own filing in lieu of using the commission's forms. Commissioners were advised that they had 60 days from the date the petition was submitted to respond. Commissioners agreed to consider the petition and the response and reconvene in approximately one month to discuss and decide how to respond.

Reports. Commissioners provided reports of community involvement. Commissioner Kooiker requested to add a review of the commission's standard for damage awards to the next meeting's agenda, citing a 2018 award that he believed was too low. He stated he wanted staff to be more aggressive in awards but not to swing too far in the other direction. Assistant Attorney General Fiala agreed to gather and bring jury verdicts from employment discrimination cases and commission administrative awards to the next meeting. Commissioners agreed to add the item to the next agenda.

Executive Director Johnson provided an update on rulemaking for 2019 Iowa Acts, chapter 65, stating that no one attended the public hearing and no one provided public comments before the hearing. Executive Director Johnson further provided an update on the status of contracts with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and Housing and Urban Development, the commission's budget, audit results (no issues found), hiring, and the April 3, 2020, symposium at Prairie Meadows Racetrack and Casino.

Ms. Debra Stewart provided an update on the intern program and Ms. SueAnn Johnson provided an update on outreach committee activities.

Next Meeting. Commissioners scheduled the next meeting for October 11, 2019, at 1:30 p.m.

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